



Praying with the image of

'Christ with Mary and Martha' - Luke 10:38-42

Artist: Jan Vermeer (1632-1675). *'Christ with Mary and Martha'* is the only surviving Vermeer with a narrative theme. Though it does not illustrate the main point of the story it is a beautifully un-forced look at Christ having a relaxed conversation. (Bruce Bernard, *The Bible and its Painters*, Orbis Publishing: London, 1983.).

In the act of gazing- of parable seeing, we are invited to gaze at the image and await revelation in the same spirit that Jesus invited the disciples to gaze at the seed and learn from its many ways of growing in fertile soil, rocky soil, shallow soil, and in the midst of weeds.

(Marianne Hieb, rsm. "The Prayer of Art-Journaling and Spiritual Direction," in *Presence*, International Journal of Spiritual Direction, Vol. 2 No. 1 January 1996.)

Reflection

In this story Jesus interacts with the transforming power of grace in the lives of Mary and Martha. We note that a conversation is taking place and the dialogue is one of deep listening to the other. Within the gospel narrative the raising of Lazarus signifies the present possibility for transformation that grace introduces into the life of faith. Grace breaks apart all our pre-conceived ideas of what is possible by faith in the here and now of our lives. Faith grounded in grace opens our eyes to new truths beyond our imagining. It enables us to hope beyond hope.

Meditation

Gaze upon the image and imagine you are participating in the conversation. Listen deeply to what you hear in your heart.

What might you add to the conversation?

Ponder upon Martha's statement: "*Yes Lord I believe that you are the Christ the Son of God.*" What do you ask of Jesus as you contemplate this image?

Open your heart to receive the grace.

Mantra

Inpoured Spirit (Margaret Rizza, *Silence of the Soul*, Kevin Mayhew Ltd. 2002.)

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